

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

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1. A method for coordinating media and messaging operations in an information processing system, comprising the steps of:

- 5 streaming media and messages in an information processing system from a switching mechanism to a plurality of user nodes;
 receiving a plurality of unsynchronized media and messages from said plurality of user nodes in a
10 synchronizer;
 controlling the streaming of media and messages from said switching mechanism to said plurality of user nodes using said synchronizer;

- 15 2. The method of Claim 1, further comprising the step of operating said switching mechanism as a chat server.

- 20 3. The method of Claim 1, further comprising the steps of operating said plurality of user nodes as a plurality of personal computers, at least certain ones of which having videoconferencing capabilities.

- 25 4. The method of Claim 1, further comprising the steps of:
 controlling a second switching mechanism using said synchronizer; and
 streaming media and messaging from second

switching mechanism to said plurality of user nodes in
response to control by said synchronizer.

5 5. The method of Claim 1, further comprising the
step of communicating from said plurality of user nodes
to said switching mechanism.

10 6. The method of Claim 1, further comprising the
step of moderating the streaming of media and messages
to said plurality of user nodes.

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7. A system for coordinating media and messaging
in an information processing system, comprising:

a plurality of user nodes associated with an
information processing system, said plurality of users
5 having the ability to communicate media and messages;

a switching mechanism for streaming media and
messages to said plurality of user nodes; and

a synchronizer for receiving media and
messages from said plurality of user nodes and
10 controlling said switching mechanism in response to
received media and messages.

8. The system of Claim 7, wherein said streaming
media comprises chat and further wherein said switching
15 mechanism comprises a chat server.

9. The system of Claim 7, wherein said plurality
of user nodes comprise a plurality of personal
computers having videoconferencing capabilities.

10. The system of Claim 7, further comprising:
a second switching mechanism associated with
said synchronizer; and

said switching mechanism for streaming media
25 and messaging from second to said plurality of user
nodes in response to control by said synchronizer.

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11. The system of Claim 7, further comprising a communications link for communicating from said plurality of user nodes to said switching mechanism.

5 12. The system of Claim 7, further comprising moderation instructions and circuitry associated with said switching mechanism for moderating the streaming of media and messages to said plurality of user nodes.

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13. A system, comprising:
a display device; and
a computer for, in response to a command,
establishing media and chat regions on said display
5 device, said media region being embedded in said chat
region, and said chat region being a real time
continuously open bi-directional communications chat
region.

10 14. The system of Claim 13 wherein said computer
is for, in response to said command, establishing a
browser region on said display device, said chat region
being embedded in said browser region.

15 15. The system of Claim 13 wherein said media
region is a continuously streaming media region.

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A 16. A system including a computer network,
comprising:

5 a media device;
a display device;
a computer coupled to said media device and
to the computer network and for:
establishing a streaming media region on said
display device;
receiving a first streaming media
10 transmission from a first media source through the
computer network and, in response thereto, causing said
media device to output said first streaming media
transmission;
receiving a second streaming media
15 transmission from a second streaming media session
through the computer network and, in response thereto,
causing said display device to display content
associated with said second streaming media
transmission in said streaming media region; and
20 synchronizing said first streaming media
transmission and said second streaming transmission for
controlling the distribution of said first streaming
media transmission and said second streaming media
transmission.

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5 17. The system of Claim 16 wherein said computer comprises instructions and circuitry for establishing a browser region on said display device, and wherein said streaming media region is a real time continuously open bi-directional communications chat region embedded in said browser region.

10 18. The system of Claim 17 wherein said streaming media region associated with a Web page, and further wherein said Web page associates with said browser region.

15 19. The system of Claim 16 wherein said computer comprises instructions and circuitry for selectively enabling said output of said second media transmission in response to one or more commands from a user.

20 20. The system of Claim 16, wherein said computer further comprises instructions and circuitry for moderating the flow of said first streaming media transmission and second streaming media transmission.

25 21. The system of Claim 16, wherein said computer further comprises moderating instructions and circuitry for moderating the flow of said first streaming media transmission and second streaming media transmission, said moderating instructions and circuitry for moderating the flow of chat.

22. The system of Claim 16, wherein said computer
further comprises moderating instructions and circuitry
for moderating the flow of said first streaming media
transmission and second streaming media transmission,
said moderating instructions and circuitry for
moderating the flow of video conference transmissions.

23. The system of Claim 16, wherein said computer
further comprises moderating instructions and circuitry
for moderating the flow of said first streaming media
transmission and second streaming media transmission,
said moderating instructions and circuitry for
moderating the flow of teleconference transmissions.

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24. A method for synchronizing the streaming of media transmission to create a message thread, comprising the steps of:

(a) transmitting a first base message;

5 (b) transmitting zero more second response messages responsive to said first base message, said second response messages being hierarchically responsive to said first base message or other said second messages; and

10 associating with one or more of said first base message or said second response messages a predetermined streaming media transmission.

15 25. The method of Claim 24, further comprising the steps of moderating the flow of said first base message, and at least one said second messages, and said at least one third messages.

20 26. The method of Claim 24, further comprising the steps of moderating the flow of said first base message, and at least one of said second messages, and said at least one third message for moderating the flow of video conference transmissions.

25 27. The method of Claim 24, further comprising the steps of moderating the flow of said first base message, and at least one of said second messages, and

said at least one third message, for moderating the
flow of teleconference transmissions.

28. The method of Claim 24, further comprising
5 the steps of playing back an associated audio element
upon reading said first base message, said at least one
second messages, and said at least one third messages.

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